

Community Schools and the “Four Pillars” Resources

“A full-service community school is a public elementary or secondary school that uses established partnerships between schools, families, and community organizations to provide well-rounded educational opportunities and meet the social, emotional, physical, mental health, and academic needs of students.”

~Federal Department of Education Full-Service Community Schools FAQ’s, July 2021

Community Schools History, Models, and Organizations

The National Center for Community Schools’ [Building Community Schools: A Guide for Action](#) is considered the go-to resource of most community school practitioners. “With 20,000 copies in print [...] this guidebook is one of several publications that have helped advance the community schools agenda nationally and internationally.” Don’t miss the comprehensive [Needs Assessment Toolkit](#) and [Community School Coordinator Job Description](#).

[Community Schools as an effective school improvement strategy](#) is a review of the evidence from 143 rigorous research studies of the community school model by the Learning Policy Institute in collaboration with the National Education policy Center.

[Community schools playbook](#) policy and implementation guide is for decision makers, educators, and community partners looking to address non-academic barriers to school success. The playbook illustrates the “four pillars” of community schools and highlights exemplary Community School initiatives from across the United States.

[Coalition for Community Schools](#) is a professional organization that has championed the community schools model as equity-driven and research based strategy. The [How to Start a Community School page](#) includes community school standards, implementation, and evaluation resources.

[Communities in Schools](#) is a national organization that has recently established a chapter [here in Minnesota](#). Communities in Schools provides a model for student supports that shares several features with the community school model outlined by the Coalition for Community Schools. The Communities in Schools model has been extensively evaluated and has demonstrated success particularly with regard to student attendance.

[Community Partnership Schools](#) model involves long-term partnerships among four core partners — a school district, a university or college, a community-based nonprofit, and a healthcare provider, as well as others. This comprehensive model of a community school leverages the social and institutional capital of the partners, making it possible for the school to offer resources and services that address the needs identified by the community.

This [MinnPost community voices article](#) features district community schools coordinators Patrice Howard Julie Ruzek article on the strengths of the FSCS model in helping schools quickly pivot and respond to emergent needs that arose in the dual pandemics of 2020. While this 2018 [MinnPost Profile of Community School initiatives in Minnesota](#) includes information and a history of community schools in Minnesota.

Community School Site Coordinator

[Community Schools Coordinators Network](#) is a professional learning community of over 400 Community School Coordinators across the country who connect and learn from each other, and have a centralized place to find tools and resources.

[Leading with Purpose and Passion: A Guide for Community School Directors](#) is a useful handbook published by the National Center for Community Schools that illustrates the roles, responsibilities, and essential skills and competencies of a community school director/site coordinator.

Minnesota Community Schools Coordinators Network – There is a growing network of community school coordinators in Minnesota. [Email Deanna Hron](#) to join the email list and receive updates on shared resources and planned gatherings.

[National Education Association Community Schools Micro-Credential](#) is specifically made for those leading the implementation of the Community School strategy on a school level. This eight-part online course gives participants the strongest skills available to implement a best practice version of the Community School strategy at any school.

[Return on Investment of a Community School Coordinator](#) This 2019 case study from the ABC Community School Partnership in Albuquerque, New Mexico snapshots a 711% return on investment (ROI) for a five-year period, and can be used to invite partners to better understand the role and economic implications of coordinators.

Collaborative Leadership and Collective Impact Practices

[Creating Consistency and Coherence through Continuous Improvement](#) process encourages districts and schools to look across their programs for focus, coherence and connections using the lens of equity and the key components of continuous improvement. Continuous improvement helps collaborative leaders reflect on their current work with a growth mind set, focused on improving “how” they implement change to improve.

[Ensuring Safe and Supportive Schools](#) is for all members of the school community: board members, superintendents, principals, teachers, school support staff, students, families, individuals and community organizations. It provides guidance to support the school community as they work together to provide respectful, safe and supportive schools.

[Leadership Structure for Community Schools](#) illustrates how schools can build a collaborative leadership structure that supports cross-boundary decision making and shared goal-setting and accountability. The page provides further resources based on specific leadership roles including business leaders, community-based organizations, families, policymakers, school leaders, teachers and teacher unions.

[Public Engagement Strategies](#) is the University of Minnesota Extension’s resource page designed to help community leaders learn strategies for involving and engaging with the public, planning and facilitating meetings and making group decisions.

[Re-Envisioning, Not Just Rebuilding: Looking Ahead to a Post-COVID-19 World](#) from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University.

Strive Network – [collective impact](#)

Stanford Social Innovations – [Community System Solutions Framework: alternatives to collective impact model](#) and [Community-Defined Evidence as a Framework for Equitable Implementation](#)

Funding and Equitable Resource Distribution

Federal Department of Education’s [July 2021 Full-Service Community Schools Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) (beginning at question 5) includes lists activities related to the FSCS model, and the federal funding resources including ARP and Title programs that may be used to fund these activities.

The Minnesota Department of Education’s [Equitable Resource Distribution Overview](#) , [Equitable Resource Distribution Guide](#) and [Title I, Part A Allowable Funding Flexibilities Series](#) are tools to help districts and charters examine how resources (people, time, and money) can be used equitably in their education systems. Readings, tools, and process suggestions for equitable access to effective teachers and for equitable resource distribution are included.

The [Dimensions of Educational Resource Equity](#) and this [2020-21 Advocate’s Guide to District –Level Equity Actions](#) from the Alliance for Resource Equity are designed to help schools unlock better, more equitable school experiences for children in their communities.

Integrated Student Supports

[The Wraparound Replication Cookbook](#), developed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, provides a helpful and detailed overview of establishing integrated student supports in schools.

[Making the Grade: Assessing the Evidence for Integrated Student Supports](#) (Child Trends, 2014) Integrated student supports represent a promising approach, well-grounded in theory, research, and community experience.

Potential local partnerships

Several state government and philanthropic organizations and initiatives offer potential partnership opportunities and resource referrals to support a Full-Service Community School’s – Integrated Student Supports pillar programming. Please email further partnership suggestions for inclusion on this list to mde.fscs@state.mn.us. Programs and initiatives that have come to our attention in this work are:

[Bridge to Benefits](#) is a project by Children’s Defense Fund-Minnesota to improve the well-being of families and individuals by linking them to public work support programs and tax credits. By answering a few simple questions, and without providing identifiable information, you can determine if a client may be eligible for support.

Connecting adult family members with ways to further their education is a valuable family engagement practice that can help stabilize families and reduce the number of students experiencing homelessness and high mobility. [Free Minnesota Adult Education Resources](#) lists free adult education resources in your community.

[COVID-19 Resources for Undocumented Immigrants](#) is a massive spreadsheet of national and local resource referrals to supports available for undocumented immigrants gathered by the [Betancourt Macias Family Scholarship Program](#).

[Disability Hub MN for families](#) is a free statewide staffed resource network that helps families solve problems, navigate the system and plan for the future. Whether they're facing an immediate need or looking years ahead, Hub experts can help families find solutions, make connections and take steps to move ahead.

The [Food and Nutrition Division of Minnesota Department of Education](#) administers the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs. These programs promote the health and well-being of children and help fight hunger and obesity. Community partners such as schools, child care centers and non-profits are reimbursed for providing healthy meals to children.

Your local [Public Housing Agency \(PHA\)](#) offers assistance and tailored information about public housing programs. Schools and families need to [understand and protect educational rights when students experience housing instability](#).

Minnesota's [Youth Services Network](#) provides information about shelter and services for youth experiencing homelessness.

The [MNHelp.Info database](#) contains information on the community services individuals and communities need to sustain and improve their daily lives--health care and childcare, job training, education and recreation, retirement, disability and social service information.

CareerForce is Minnesota's Career development and talent matching resource. CareerForce is a business-led network of private, public and nonprofit partners and [locations throughout Minnesota](#) committed to helping [individuals start, advance or change their career](#), [employers attract, develop and retain talent](#), and Minnesota thrive economically by continuing to build its world-class workforce.

[FamilyWise](#) has been keeping children living in Minnesota safe and helping families lead stable, healthy and productive lives since 1976. FamilyWise educates, empowers and enriches families who are struggling with poverty, substance abuse, mental health issues, homelessness and domestic violence.

[Twenty-four Community Action Agencies and 11 Tribal Nations](#) serve all 87 counties across Minnesota, providing poverty solutions through various local, state, private, and federal programs and resources that remove obstacles and solve problems that block the achievement of self-sufficiency.

[Minnesota Initiative Foundations \(MIFs\)](#) are six regional foundations working to strengthen the communities and economies of Greater Minnesota. Each MIF is independent and serves its geographic region with grants, business loans, programs and priorities, and donor services, and collaborates on several statewide initiatives. The MIFs are nationally recognized as unique resources to the people, businesses and communities of rural Minnesota.

Minnesota's [Refugee Resettlement Network Agencies](#) provide a variety of language and culturally appropriate coordinated services (including addressing immediate needs, employment and career improvement, helping

children achieve academic success and prepare for college, and low cost legal help) with a whole family approach for people under humanitarian protection who have been in the U.S. less than five years.

Minnesota's [School-Linked Mental Health Services](#) initiative co-locates effective mental health services with schools and students. These services are increasing accessibility for children and youth who are uninsured or under insured, improving clinical and functional outcomes for children and youth with a mental health diagnosis, and improving identification of mental health issues for children and youth.

[Second Harvest Heartland](#) works in close partnership with nearly 1,000 agency partner programs in Minnesota and western Wisconsin that provide direct client service, to distribute large amounts of donated food directly to persons living with food insecurity.

More than 300,000 children in Minnesota live with food insecurity. When these children don't have access to the free and reduced meal programs at school, they don't have access to reliable food and the risk of hunger is very real. [Every Meal \(formerly The Sheridan Story\)](#) works to fight hunger in our community by filling the gaps in food access that children face during weekends, summers, and extended breaks.

Enriched and Out of School Time Learning Opportunities

[Ignite Afterschool](#) formerly known as the Minnesota Afterschool Network, Ignite Afterschool brings a combination of resources, training, networking, and expertise to improve the availability and quality of afterschool programming for Minnesota youth.

University of Minnesota Extension's [What is Youth Development?](#) provides information regarding the establishment of youth development programs in schools.

[You for Youth's](#) mission is to build a community of caring and competent afterschool professionals who nurture, motivate, and engage children and youth in 21st Century Community Learning Center programs.

The Annenberg Institute at Brown University hosts The National Student Support Accelerator and develops materials and webinars to share research, policy recommendations, and tools like the [Toolkit for Tutoring Programs](#) for designing and implementing high-impact tutoring programs.

Active Family, Student, and Community Engagement

Engaging Families during the COVID-19 pandemic

[Wellness and healing-centered school re-opening recommendations](#) from the Equity Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative at the NYU Metro Center.

The [Supporting Students and families resources](#) on the Minnesota Department of Education's COVID-19 Updates page includes a variety of resources to support schools to navigate challenges and identify new opportunities for engaging with families and students during COVID-19.

The Department has also created a [set of recorded webinars](#) designed to support district and school staff as they provide distance learning programming and services to their students. Start with [Promising Practices for Connecting with Students and Families](#) that have had little to no engagement during distance learning.

The [Minnesota Statewide Family Engagement Center](#) (MNSFEC) provides free services for families and schools including webinars and other professional development. The Center's Hmong, Latino, Somali and African American family liaisons provide coaching and resources to families that help them support and advocate for their child's learning and navigate school-related issues.

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE), with assistance from the State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education (SACPIE), gathered [Promising Partnership Practices during COVID-19](#) to support students and families.

Protocols and prompts for connecting with families during COVID-19

1. Flamboyant Foundation – [Family Wellness Check In Guidance](#)
2. NYU Steinhardt Metro Center – [Tools for Educators to Listen to and Learn from Families During COVID-19 School Closures](#)

Surveying families during COVID-19

1. School Resource Hub - [Reentry Toolkit Phase 1](#)
2. Panorama Education – [53 Questions to Ask Students, Families, and Staff During the Pandemic](#)
3. TNTP's COVID-19 School Response Toolkit – [Stakeholder Feedback Reflection and Planning Guide](#)

Staple Resources for building educator capacities to engage families

Resources are listed alphabetically. Starred () selections are foundational in the Family Engagement field.*

The [Family Engagement Action Plan \(FEAP\) process and template](#) helps Minnesota schools navigate the shifts needed to move from status quo family involvement efforts to effective family engagement mechanisms, co-designed with families that represent the full diversity and perspectives of the school community.

[Beyond the Bake Sale Family School Partnership rubric](#) is a simple two-page assessment that can help a school gather feedback and reflect on where parents and educators believe the school fits within the four versions of family-school partnerships and was originally published in the book [Beyond the Bake Sale](#).

[Changing how we talk about family engagement \(video\)](#) and the resources in this [Reframing Family, school and Community Engagement communications toolkit](#) are designed to collectively build the understanding and support we need to change the narrative around family, school, and community engagement.

[Community and Family Engagement: Principals share what works](#) is a guide from the Coalition for Community Schools. The guide explores the principal's role in engaging families and community members, why engagement is essential to the community schools model, and the most effective engagement strategies and approaches.

[Cultivating a Community of Champions for Children through Transformative Family Engagement](#) shows how equity-based family engagement helps parents and caretakers in underserved communities become effective advocates and culture-bearers in schools, which boosts educational quality and relevance.

*Dual Capacity Building Framework (DCBF) for Family-School Partnerships ([version 1 - 2013](#)) and ([version 2 - 2019](#)) build upon each other and chart a path toward transformative and sustaining family engagement efforts that are linked to student achievement and school improvement. For implementation ideas and resources visit [Dual Capacity.org](#) and the [Harvard Graduate School of Education](#), and don't miss this [five-minute video introduction](#) and this 2021 report [How Schools Can Practice Family Engagement and Dismantle Longstanding Educational Inequities](#) by the authors of the DCBF that puts the framework into practice in context of the “dual pandemics” of 2020-21.

The [Family-Community Liaison Newsletter](#) highlights stories, research, training opportunities, and tools to support Minnesota's schools in building robust family and community partnerships to support student success. If you wish to subscribe, contribute a story, or request a topic, [email Jackie Blagsvedt](#).

The [Family Leadership Design Collaborative](#) (FDLC) is a diverse group of scholars building a body of work that looks at family engagement through the lens of equity and with an asset-based mindset. Their July 2019 policy paper is [Recasting Families and Communities as Co-Designers of Education in Tumultuous Times](#).

*Flamboyant Foundation's [School-Wide](#) and [Classroom Family Engagement](#) rubrics illustrate what effective family engagement looks like in its stages of development. The rubrics can help parents and educators generate creative strategies, prioritize their efforts, and strengthen key drivers for Family Engagement.

*[Foundational Frameworks for Family Engagement \(24 minute video\)](#) Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center's Dr. Barbara Boone introduces theoretical foundations of the well-established field of family engagement research.

[Book] [Just Schools: Building Equitable Collaborations with Families and Communities](#) by Ann Ishimaru, examines the challenges and possibilities, and shares studies focused on a broad range of contexts, strategies, and practices for building more equitable forms of collaboration among nondominant families, communities, and schools.

*The research-based [Reframing Family, School, and Community Engagement communications toolkit](#) from Frameworks and NAFSCE was released in December 2019. It will equip you to change your narratives around engaging families to create a shared vision of transformative family, school and community engagement.

Head Start and Early Head Start family engagement practices focus on culturally and linguistically responsive relationship-building with key family members in a child's life. Explore Head Start's [Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework](#) and [Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement](#).

[National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement](#) (NAFSCE) assembles resources designed to give you the ideas and tools needed to enhance and improve practice in the area of family engagement.

[National PTA's Standards for Family-School Partnerships](#) includes a 6-part online assessment and a downloadable Family-School Partnerships implementation guide designed for PTA leaders, parents, school administrators and community organizations with a stake in improving schools and student achievement.

[Book] In [Natural Allies: Hope and Possibility in Teacher-Family Partnerships](#) Soo Hong explores how the dimensions of race, class, culture, and family history shape the interactions between teachers and families, particularly in schools where teacher-parent dynamics may be fraught with distrust or misunderstanding.

*[Next Generation Family Engagement Resource Center](#) includes the 2018 Carnegie Challenge Paper, videos, and tools that introduce five “shifts” schools can make to boost their family and community engagement practices. The [corresponding executive summary](#) is useful for introducing Next-Generation Family Engagement concepts.

[Book] [Powerful Partnerships: A teacher’s guide to engaging families for student success](#) is written by teachers and parent engagement expert Karen L. Mapp, EdD. The book and companion website explore the mindsets and practices that help teachers nurture strong relationships with the families of the children that they teach.

The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) maintains a [School Climate Survey Compendium](#) of valid and reliable surveys, assessments, and scales of school climate that can assist educators in their efforts to identify and assess their conditions for learning – including active family engagement.

[Supporting Student Success through Authentic Partnerships: Reflection from Parents and Caregivers](#) Families are often underused resources as partners in supporting the learning of their children. This tool can help educators determine the practices that can help create and sustain or hinder authentic partnerships with families.